

## II. Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for client-side management of communications channels, the method comprising:  
determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections  $N$  supportable by a client;  
identifying between one and  $N$  entities that meet a predefined criterion from a plurality of entities;  
granting permission to the identified entities to communicate with the client; and  
revoking permission to communicate with the client held by entities of the plurality of entities that are not among the identified entities,  
wherein the determining, identifying, granting, and revoking steps are performed by the client.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein determining  $N$  includes identifying a connection speed of the client to a network.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein determining  $N$  further includes identifying a processor speed of a central processing unit within the client.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein granting permission to the identified entities includes sending a permission message from the client to each of the identified entities.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein revoking permission includes sending a revocation message from the client to each of the entities that are not among the identified entities.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the predefined criterion is distance based is a distance to the client within a virtual world, wherein the plurality of entities and the client are represented by different avatars within the virtual world such that the distance between each of the plurality of entities and the client can be calculated using coordinate information within the virtual world.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
determining whether the client has received permission from each of the identified entities to communicate with each entity; and  
if permission has not been received from one of the identified entities, identifying between one and N entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the previously identified entity from which permission has not been received.

8-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Original) A computer readable medium containing a plurality of computer executable instructions for execution on a client computer, the instructions for:  
determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections N supportable by the client computer;  
identifying between one and N entities that meet a predefined criterion;  
sending a permission message from the client computer to each of the identified entities, wherein the permission message indicates that the entity can establish a communication channel with the client computer; and  
sending a revocation message from the client computer to each of the entities that are not among the identified entities, wherein the revocation message indicates that the entity can no longer communicate with the client computer.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 further comprising instructions for:  
determining whether the client computer has received permission from each of the identified entities to communicate with each entity; and  
if permission has not been received from one of the identified entities, identifying between one and N entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the previously identified entity from which permission has not been received.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 further comprising instructions for maintaining a permission table on the client computer, wherein the permission table associates

each identified entity with a first indicator representing whether a permission message has been sent by the client computer and a second indicator representing that a permission message has been received by the client computer.

21. (New) A method for client-side management of communications channels, the method comprising:

- determining a maximum number of simultaneous connections  $N$  supportable by a client;
- identifying between one and  $N$  entities that meet a predefined criterion from a plurality of entities;
- determining whether the identified entities have permission to communicate with the client;
- granting permission to communicate with the client to the identified entities that do not have permission to communicate with the client; and
- revoking permission to communicate with the client to those entities of the plurality of entities that are not among the identified entities,

wherein the determining, identifying, granting, and revoking steps are performed by the client.

22. (New) The method of claim 21 further comprising:

- determining whether the client has permission to communicate with each of the identified entities; and
- if the client does not have permission to communicate with one or more of the identified entities, identifying between one and  $N$  entities that meet the predefined criterion, wherein the identifying excludes the one or more identified entities the client does not have permission to communicate with.

23. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein the predefined criterion is a distance to the client within a virtual world, wherein the plurality of entities and the client are represented by different avatars within the virtual world such that the distance between each of the plurality of entities and the client can be calculated using coordinate information within the virtual world.

24. (New) The method of claim 21 further comprising:  
identifying one or more of the identified entities that meet a second predefined criterion;  
wherein the granting permission to communicate with the client is limited to the one or more identified entities meeting the second criterion;

wherein the revoking permission to communicate with the client includes the one or more identified entities not meeting the second criterion.

25. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the second predefined criterion is based on a hardware or software characteristic of the identified entity.

26. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein determining whether the identified entities have permission to communicate with the client further comprises maintaining a permission table associating each of the entities with a first indicator representing whether permission to communicate with the client has been granted by the client.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the permission table associates each of the entities with a second indicator representing whether permission to communicate with the entity has been granted by the entity.